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ABSTRACT

A random sample of 1,015 parents in 23 counties in the states of Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia were interviewed in an attempt to ascertain the range of their circumstances, experiences, and needs. Counties were selected randomly within the major categories of Appalachian rural, non-Appalachian rural, and urban. Data were gathered in the following areas: characteristics of parents and parenting, sources of advice and help, awareness and utilization of local programs and services, and parent attitudes about several dimensions of parenthood. The study design designated that the bulk of the interviews would be conducted with the parents of third graders. For comparison purposes, a smaller number of interviews with parents of kindergarten students and parents of 10th grade students were planned. The focus of this report is on comparison of the survey results for two major subgroups, the parents of 358 Appalachian rural third graders and those of the 362 urban third graders. Similarities and differences found between parents of third graders and parents of kindergarten and 10th grade students are also discussed. (RH)

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THE REGIONAL PARENTING SURVEYS:
BASE SAMPLE SURVEY

By

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July 1981

NOTE TO READERS

Later reports to come out of the Base Sample Survey data include individual reports for each of the 23 counties where the survey was conducted and an analysis of sub-samples representing different family types ("Characteristics of Families With Special Needs in Relation to Schools," 1982).*

In addition a questionnaire version of the Base Sample Survey interview schedule was distributed to parents in selected school districts, both rural and urban, in Alabama and Pennsylvania. Individual reports have been prepared describing the results for each of these six school districts.

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*Readers of later reports will note that the total number of sampled parents referred to is slightly larger than in this original report. This is due to the fact that some additional interviews came in after the designated deadline.

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

Interest in parenting and a recognition of both the difficulties of parenting in the modern world and the crucial role that parents play in their children's education and development led to the creation of the Regional Parenting Surveys. The Regional Parenting Surveys were conceived as a series of studies and programs to include data gathered from parents, from model parenting program practitioners and from the division's Advisory Task Force (representative of the seven member states). These were to have been followed by the development of recommendations, instruments, workshops and the local implementation of programs to meet the needs of various parent populations in different communities.

The Base Sample Survey was that part of the larger effort which was designed to obtain current information from parents themselves about the life circumstances, experiences and needs of parents in the Region. This included an investigation of parents' sources of advice and help in child-rearing, the extent of their formal and informal social networks and their awareness and utilization of local programs and services.

Study Design and Procedures

Data was collected through personal, open-ended interviews with random samples of parents in 23 counties in the states of Kentucky, Ohio,

Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. The random nature of the sample was considered essential in order to insure that the range of family and parenting situations in existence be represented. Counties were selected randomly within the major categories of Appalachian Rural, Non-Appalachian Rural and Urban. The definition of an Urban County was one in which there existed a central city of 50,000 or more and which was also a part of a larger SMSA.

Because of the necessity of good rapport between the respondent (parent) and the interviewer, it was decided to hire local residents as interviewers in each county. Random samples of parents (of the particular grade levels) and the names of prospective local interviewers were obtained through the cooperation of the school system(s) in the selected counties. An all-day training session for local interviewers was held in a central location in each of the five states. Interviewers were trained in methods designed to achieve high reliability and validity. Following this session, the local interviewers conducted practice interviews, engaged in telephone conferences with AEL staff and conducted surveys of local programs and services available to parents in their counties. The information obtained from the survey of local programs and services was incorporated into the Interview Schedules for each county and also used for the interpretation of certain responses during the coding stage. Following this preliminary work, each interviewer proceeded to contact and interview the sample of parents prepared for his/her county.

Response rates and interviewers' experiences will be written as a separate report. The problems of hiring and supervising interviewers mainly by telephone and mail will be discussed. The problems of local interviewers in first, locating respondents (even though addresses and phone numbers were

provided) and secondly, obtaining successful interviews, will also be described. The majority of our interviewers were successful. Some developed very creative ways to deal with the problems involved. Our experiences and those of our local interviewers should be of benefit to others who may engage in similar surveys in the future. Comparison will also be made (in this forthcoming supplementary report) between this study using personal open-ended interviews and the study conducted in Alabama and Pennsylvania using a questionnaire (a version of the parenting interview) distributed through the schools.

The study design designated that the bulk of the interviews would be conducted with the parents of third graders. However, for comparison purposes, a smaller number of interviews with parents of kindergarten students and parents of tenth grade students were planned. In most of the selected counties, 40 parent interviews were expected. However, in the three counties in which parents of all three grade levels were interviewed the goal was 120 interviews. The total number of interviews obtained is 1,015. The following table illustrates the break-down of these interviews.

Number of Parent Interviews by Region and Grade Level

Parents of:	<u>Appal. Rural</u>	<u>Non-Appal. Rural</u>	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Total</u>
Kindergarten Students	59	0	27	86
Third Grade Students	358	115	362	835
Tenth Grade Students	69	0	25	94
TOTAL	<u>486</u>	<u>115</u>	<u>414</u>	<u>1,015</u>

Coding of the interviews using Codebook I (closed or simple responses) and Codebook II (open-ended responses) was accomplished by five persons, one of whom is the research assistant for this project. Continuous reliability checks were run during the coding period. Reliability scores were always high, ranging from 97.2 to 99.6.

This report will focus on a comparison of the survey results for the two major sub-groups, the 358 Appalachian Rural third graders and the 362 Urban third graders. The total referred to is the grand total of 1,015 interviews. There will also be some discussion of similarities and differences found between parents of third graders and the parents of kindergarten and tenth grade students.

DESCRIPTION OF PARENTS AND PARENTING

Demographic Information

As the only criterion for a respondent was that she/he be one of the adults with major responsibility for the sample child, it was theoretically possible to obtain interviews with a range of persons related in different ways to the sample child, e.g., grandmother, aunt, foster father. However, in reality, it turned out that 93% of our main respondents were the natural mothers of the sample child and 97% were females. In 15% of the cases a second respondent participated actively in the interview; this person was the sample child's natural father. An interesting finding was the variance by Region in the percent of sample children not presently living with their natural mothers or their natural fathers for any reason (death, separation, divorce, etc.).

Sample Children Not Living With <u>Natural Mothers</u>		Sample Children Not Living With <u>Natural Fathers</u>	
Third Grade Appalachian Rural	Third Grade Urban	Third Grade Appalachian Rural	Third Grade Urban
14(3.9%)	8 (2.2%)	59(16.5%)	104(28.7%)
n = 358	n = 362	n = 358	n = 362

The mean age of the main respondent was 34.5. The average number of persons in the respondent's household was between 4 and 5. Over 92% of the main respondents were white. Here there was some variation by Region; in Appalachian Rural counties 95% were white and 1.4% were black while in Urban

counties 87% were white and 12% black. Ninety percent of respondents had a religious preference, 73% were Protestant and 46% attended religious services once a week or more.

Forty-three percent of all respondents had lived in their communities over 20 years, only 18% had lived there less than 5 years. Rural respondents were slightly more likely than Urban residents to have lived over 20 years in the same location. Only 12% of the Rural respondents had grown up in a city. However, 20% of the Urban respondents had grown up on a farm or in the country. Slightly over one-half of all respondents had lived in the same house or apartment for the past 5 years. Slightly over one-fourth had moved once during the 5 years, approximately one-eighth had moved twice and one-twentieth had moved 3 times. Reasons people had moved were similar across the Regions. The most important reason was "wanted a better home" or "built own house." The next most important reason was "changed job."

Forty-two percent of our main respondents were high school graduates; 18% had completed some college. The Urban group were somewhat more likely to have had some college education than the Rural group (21% compared to 13%). Very few respondents or their spouses are attending school at present (3% to 7%). However, when asked about plans to go back to school in the future, 25% of the main respondents replied "yes." This dramatic rise did not occur for spouses.

Plans To Go Back To School in Future

	Total *	Third Grade Parents Appalachian Rural *	Third Grade Parents Urban *
Respondent	25%	22%	29%
Spouse	7%	6%	8%
Both	4%	3%	4%
Neither, NA	64%	69%	59%
	n=1,015	n=358	n=362

*Please note: In the remaining tables of this report, unless otherwise indicated, Appalachian Rural will be used to designate the 358 parents of third graders living in Rural Appalachia and Urban will be used to designate the 362 parents of third graders living in Urban counties. Total will refer to all the 1,015 interviewed in the survey.

Reasons given by the respondents planning to return to school were:

- 1) to obtain additional training beyond high school
- 2) to obtain a GED
- 3) earn a college degree.

Overall 50% of the main respondents were in the labor force. There was, however, considerable variation by Region.

Respondents' Work Status

	Total	Appalachian Rural	Urban
Full-time	34%	27%	39%
Part-time	15%	11%	17%
Looking	1%	2%	1%
Total # in labor force	50%	40%	57%
	n=1,015	n=358	n=362

Most of the jobs held by Rural respondents could be classified as 1) clerical, 2) operative, or 3) service. Most of the jobs held by Urban respondents were 1) clerical, 2) service and 3) professional.

Preparation for Parenthood

When parents were asked if they had had any other previous experience raising children, 30% replied "yes." This question was open to the respondent's interpretation. When asked to explain what the previous experience consisted of, Appalachian Rural respondents named 1) raising own children (in earlier family) 2) helping raise younger siblings and 3) part-time experience with children (as babysitter, teacher, nurse, etc.). Urban respondents first named 1) younger siblings followed by 2) own children and 3) part-time experience.

A second inferred measure of previous experience was whether or not the sample child had older brothers or sisters in the home. Fifty-nine percent of the Appalachian Rural respondents had an older child in the home; 55% of the Urban respondents had such a child.

Thinking back to an earlier time in their lives (before having children) respondents were asked whether or not they had had "a clear idea of what it would be like to be a parent." Sixty-seven percent responded "no," that they had not had a clear idea. Rural parents were even less likely than Urban parents to feel that they understood what parenting would be like beforehand. (Rural 73%, Urban 63%)

Finally parents were asked if they had had any courses in school which might have helped prepare them to be parents. Approximately 40% named such a course, although only 27% considered that the course had been beneficial when the real experience of being a parent occurred. The majority of courses named were home economics courses and the main reason they were considered useful by some had to do with knowledge about cooking and sewing and child care. Criticisms offered of courses taken in school were 1) that they were too general, too theoretical 2) that they were meaningless before the actual experience of being a parent and 3) that changing times made much information irrelevant.

Present Parenting Situation

There was an attempt in each interview to determine the life circumstances in which the parenting was taking place. Knowledge of type of family structure, of the availability of others to whom parent(s) can turn for long-term support or for short term child care are important in understanding the present parenting situation. Whether or not the parent(s) is or feels alone in shouldering the responsibilities of parenthood, and whether or not "other adults" are exerting significant influence on the child have many implications for the quality of the parenting as experienced by both parent and child.

Looking at type of family structure it is evident that being a single parent was more common in the Urban counties (19%) than in the Rural counties (7%).

Type of Family Structure			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Appalachian Rural</u>	<u>Urban</u>
Nuclear	78%	82%	73%
Single-parent	12%	7%	19%
Extended A: (Nuclear plus others)	7%	9%	5%
Extended B (Single-parent plus others)	3%	3%	4%
	<u>n = 1,015</u>	<u>n = 358</u>	<u>n = 362</u>

When asked about arrangements for child care when the respondent had to be away, over 80% of all sample parents said that they used some type of child care arrangement regularly. The difference between the Appalachian Rural and Urban samples was that Urban parents tended to use child care arrangements often, whereas Appalachian Rural parents used them seldom.

Most commonly used child care providers were:

Appalachian Rural

- 1) Family member (other than immediate family or child's grandparents)
- 2) Neighbor/friend/babysitter
- 3) Maternal grandparent

Urban

- 1) Neighbor/friend/
babysitter
- 2) Family member (other than
immediate family and child's
grandparents)
- 3) Maternal grandparent

In response to regular pooling or sharing arrangements with other parents, (e.g., taking children to school bus, to special lessons) Urban parents (21%) were much more likely to use such arrangements than were Appalachian Rural parents (10%).

However, probably a better indication of a more long-term type of parental support were responses to the following question: "While recognizing

that you (and your husband) have the main responsibility for raising (child's name), I would be interested in knowing who else you entrust with some responsibility for his/her care and upbringing at this time?"

Who Else Do You Entrust With
Some Responsibility For Your Child?

	Total	Appalachian Rural	Urban
1 person	21%	19%	22%
2 persons	27%	28%	26%
3 or more persons	36%	35%	37%
No one	15%	17%	16%
	n=1,015	n=358	n=362

Persons Named As Sharing Responsibility

	Total	Appalachian Rural	Urban
Child's maternal grandparent	51%	45%	53%
Relatives other than child's grandparents	38%	44%	33%
Child's older siblings	31%	32%	32%
Child's paternal grandparent	26%	28%	23%
Friend/neighbor	26%	26%	29%
Worker in child's organization	10%	9%	14%
Biological parent	4%	3%	5%

Thus we see that most parents do share responsibility for their child, often with several other persons. Relatives were the most likely candidates, with a maternal grandparent heading the list. However, there were some parents who also named a friend or a worker in an organization (e.g., teacher, coach, physical therapist).

We were also interested in other adults who are important influences on children. Therefore, parents were asked, "Are there other adults (in addition to yourself and your husband) whom your child really enjoys knowing, responds to in a special way or is emotionally attached to?" Again we discovered that, in the majority of cases, there were such adults in the sample child's life. And while there was some overlapping, these were often not the same persons who were entrusted with responsibility for the child.

Other Adults Child is
Emotionally Attached to

	Total	Appalachian Rural	Urban
1 person	27%	24%	30%
2 persons	25%	29%	21%
3 or more persons	29%	29%	31%
No one	19%	18%	18.5%

Persons Named in Rank Order
(Same in the two Regions)

- 1) Relatives other than child's grandparents
- 2) Friend/neighbor/babysitter
- 3) Maternal grandparent
- 4) Paternal grandparent
- 5) Workers in organizations
- 6) Older siblings

Needs, Problems, as Parents

Parents were asked three questions concerning their perceptions of their needs as parents. These were 1) whether they felt they had special problems as parents 2) whether they had unanswered questions related to parenting and 3) whether there were any particular type of help for parents which was needed but not available locally. Overall approximately one-half of all our respondents perceived themselves as having one or more needs. However, as is evident in the following table, some needs were more characteristic of Rural parents, others of Urban parents. Urban parents were more likely to say they had special problems or unanswered questions. Rural parents were much more likely to say that some type of needed help was unavailable in their communities.

Perceived Needs of Parents

	Total	Appalachian Rural	Urban
Yes, <u>Special Problems</u>	22%	18%	26%
Yes, <u>Unanswered Questions</u>	23%	19%	24%
Yes, <u>Help Unavailable Locally</u>	24%	30%	17%
	n=1,015	n=358	n=362

Explanations of these needs were similar across the Regions. The most common explanations of special problems were 1) Problems of being a single parent, a stepparent or an adoptive parent and 2) child's illness, either physical or emotional.

Unanswered questions most frequently had to do with child development and/or parenting skills (e.g., "what are the stages children go through," "how to develop a good relationship with child," "how to know whether or not I am doing a good job as a parent?"). The second most common category was School-related questions and the third had to do with Special situations (e.g., how to deal with being a single parent with full responsibility, or having a family member addicted to alcohol or drugs, being new in community).

Explanations of needed parental help not available locally covered a wide range of types. However, highest mentions were received for Facilities and programs to help parents (centers, hot lines, specific kinds of help for specific situations, e.g., parents of handicapped children, parents of teenagers). The next most frequently mentioned need was for Youth activities and recreation centers.

An Index of Perceived Needs of parents was developed from the three questions just discussed. Respondents were rated according to the number of those questions to which they responded "yes". The possible scores ranged from 0 to 3. Results were as follows:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Appalachian Rural Parents</u>	<u>Urban Parents</u>
0	50%	51%	51%
1	34%	34%	33%
2	13%	13%	12%
3	3%	2%	4%
	n=1,015	n=358	n=362

When the Perceived Needs Index was run as a possible effect of a number of independent variables, it was clear that there are important differences within the Regions as well as between them. Some examples of these differences are provided in the following tables.

APPALACHIAN RURAL

Respondents' Education

<u>Perceived Parental Needs</u>	<u>Less Than High School Graduate</u>	<u>High School Graduate</u>	<u>Some College or More</u>
No needs expressed	62%	49%	43%
One or more needs expressed	38%	51%	57%

URBAN

Respondents' Education

<u>Perceived Parental Needs</u>	<u>Less Than High School Graduate</u>	<u>High School Graduate</u>	<u>Some College or More</u>
No needs expressed	57%	54%	37%
One or more needs expressed	43%	46%	63%

Higher educational attainment is associated with a higher perceived need score. One can speculate that those with higher education may have different attitudes leading to greater expectations for quality of family life. Greater knowledge of possibilities for help may also be involved.

APPALACHIAN RURAL

Type of Family Structure

<u>Perceived Parental Needs</u>	<u>Nuclear</u>	<u>Single-Parent</u>	<u>Extended A*</u>	<u>Extended B*</u>
No needs expressed	54%	29%	50%	43%
One or more needs expressed	46%	71%	50%	47%

URBAN

Type of Family Structure

<u>Perceived Parental Needs</u>	<u>Nuclear</u>	<u>Single-Parent</u>	<u>Extended A*</u>	<u>Extended B*</u>
No needs expressed	52%	36%	40%	56%
One or more needs expressed	48%	64%	60%	44%

1. Nuclear includes Reconstituted families.
2. Extended Family A are Nuclear families plus other related persons.
3. Extended Families B are Single-Parent families living with other related persons.

Single parent families are more likely to express parental needs than any other type of family structure. This is more evident among Appalachian Rural parents than among Urban parents. Possibly because there are fewer single-parent families in the Rural counties, they may therefore perceive themselves as being in a more unique situation than single-parents in an Urban area. Also, it is probably true that more formal support services are available to single-parent families in the Urban areas.

SOURCES OF ADVICE AND HELP

This section will explore various types of help available to parents, namely informal contacts, formal contacts and media contacts. Some discussion of the ways our sample parents used these types of help will be provided. Finally, where parents turn for help in specific situations and who or what they consider their one major source of advice and help will be presented.

Informal Contacts As Sources of Help

Informal contacts are defined as close, primary relationships with family and friends. There were two measures of these types of contacts as sources of help in child-rearing.

First, parents were asked, "About how often do you talk with other parents you know about your child or child-rearing in general?" Those who replied in the affirmative were asked whether such talks were helpful to them and if so, why. Results were as follows:

How Often Parents Talked With Other Parents

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Appal. Rural</u>	<u>Urban</u>
Often, (once a week or more)	64%	65%	62%
Fairly often (1 to 3 times a month)	12%	11%	10%
Not often or never	24%	23%	29%
	n=1,015	n=358	n=362
Do You Find These Talks Helpful?			
Yes	84%	88%	81%

There were few differences across the Regions. Such talks were helpful because they provided opportunities to "share and compare with other parents facing similar situations, to support each other." A secondary benefit was "learning new ideas, improving parenting skills."

A second measure of informal contact was a question asking parents if there were a person(s) among their close relatives and friends with whom they especially liked to discuss (the sample child) or child-rearing in general. Seventy-four percent replied that there was such a person. Just who these persons were varied somewhat by Region. Among Appalachian Rural parents first choice was "a relative other than child's grandparents" followed by "a maternal grandparent" and a "very close friend." Among Urban parents a "very close friend" was first, followed by a "maternal grandparent" and "a relative other than child's grandparent." Respondents who had such confidants agreed that the talks were helpful because these persons 1) were understanding, easy to talk to, accessible 2) had had experience with children, either personal or professional and/or 3) had children of the same age, faced situations similar to their own.

Thus understanding and support were the paramount benefits of all these parents' informal relationships.

Media as Sources of Help

Our data indicate that the media are not as important as sources of help and advice as are personal contacts, either formal or informal. Twenty-seven percent said they had recently read a book about child care or raising children. Twenty-five percent had read something on the subject in a newspaper and only 18% had read something in a pamphlet, special newsletter or bulletin. Our respondents were most likely to have read about child-rearing in a magazine (41%). In each case, among those who had read something, a smaller number remembered what the articles were about and still fewer had discussed them with anyone else. There was some variation by Region however. Urban parents were more likely to have recently

read about child-rearing than were Rural parents.

Percent Who Had Recently
Read About Child-Rearing

	<u>Appalachian Rural</u>	<u>Urban</u>
In magazines	38%	45%
In pamphlets, newsletters	14%	21%
In newspapers	20%	31%
In books	25%	28%

Slightly over one-half (55%) of all parents said reading materials could be more helpful to parents if written in laymen's terms, by people with first hand experience and if they were more readily available.

When asked about television programs (concerning children and parents) viewed in recent months, we again found that the Urban parents were somewhat more likely (51%) to have seen such programs than were the Appalachian Rural parents (45%). Almost two-thirds of all the parents felt television programs could be more helpful to parents. Their main suggestions were 1) have more programs about raising children 2) eliminate violence, set good examples and 3) be more realistic, specific, factual.

These data provide evidence that, although mass media are not a primary source of help and advice to parents, they could be more helpful than at present. Television and magazines seem to be the best media channels for reaching parents.

Formal Contacts as Sources of Help

Formal contacts are defined as those of a secondary nature, in which the relationship is segmental rather than with the whole person and in which the institutional affiliation largely defines the character of the interactions.

In our interviews, parents were asked about their contacts with school staff, with members of the medical profession and with other adults who work with their children (e.g., scout leader, coach). In addition parents were asked about their organizational membership(s) and whether or not these related in any way to their parental role.

A. Parents and the Schools. For parents, probably the single most important community organization is the school system. Yet authors over the decades have discussed the difficulties and strains inherent in school-family relations (Waller, 1932; Lightfoot, 1978). The Base Sample Survey sought to obtain measures of the quantity of contact between parents and school staff within the past year. It also inquired into the quality of these contacts, from the parents' perspectives.

The most common school contact of these parents was of course their child's teacher(s). The following offers some indication of the quantity of these contacts.

How Often Parents Talked to Teacher(s)

	Total	Appal. Rural	Urban
Often (more than once a month)	14%	17%	14%
7-12 times a year	6%	6%	6%
2-6 times a year	52%	48%	57%
Once a year	16%	16%	16%
Never	10%	10%	4%
DK, NA	2%	2%	3%
	n=1,015	n=358	n=362

An interesting discrepancy was revealed between parents' assessment of the helpfulness of their talks with teachers and their opinions as to whether or not such talks could be improved. The majority of parents were positive regarding their school contacts. (This was even more true for Urban parents than for Rural parents.) Yet, only a minority felt that these talks could not be improved.

In General, How Helpful Have Talks With Teachers Been?

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Appalachian Rural</u>	<u>Urban</u>
Very Helpful	56%	52%	65%
Somewhat Helpful	32%	36%	26%
Not at all Helpful	5%	6%	6%
DK, NA	7%	6%	3%

Could Talks With Teachers Be More Helpful?

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Appalachian Rural</u>	<u>Urban</u>
No	32%	23%	40%
Yes	44%	53%	44%
Dor.'t Know	21%	22%	15%
NA	3%	2%	1%

Thus it is obvious that, in spite of their generally positive attitude, most parents are far from being entirely satisfied with their school contacts. Suggestions for improvement were similar across the Regions. Most frequently mentioned was, "School staff should take the initiative in getting to know parents by providing more opportunities and more time for meaningful talks" (Rural 35%, Urban 43%). The next most frequently mentioned suggestion was that "Parents should show more interest in school and child's activities, be more open to suggestions from teachers" (Rural 17%, Urban 14%). Urban parents also felt strongly that teachers should diagnose problems early and communicate these to parents.

B. Parents and the Medical Profession. Parents were asked the same questions about the medical profession that they had been asked about the school staff. In general parents had had fewer contacts with doctors (regarding the sample child) than they had had with teachers. Within the past year, approximately 30% had had no such contacts, 30% had had one contact, and 40% had talked with a doctor two or more times.

Regarding the quality of their contacts with the medical profession, the results were similar to those for parent-teacher interactions. Most parents felt these contacts had been helpful; once again the Urban parents

were even more positive than the Rural parents. However, only 32% indicated complete satisfaction by saying such talks could not be made more helpful. The large "don't know" response seems to indicate uncertainty about the quality of the contacts.

In General, How Helpful Have Talks With Doctors Been?

	Total	Appalachian Rural	Urban
Very Helpful	61%	55%	67%
Somewhat Helpful	27%	32%	23%
Not at all Helpful	5%	6%	4%
DK, NA	7%	8%	7%

Could Talks With Doctors Be More Helpful?

	Total	Appalachian Rural	Urban
No	32%	30%	34%
Yes	41%	44%	42%
Don't Know	26%	25%	22%
NA	1%	1%	2%

Most frequently mentioned suggestions for improving the quality of parent-doctor talks were "that doctors should give more information, answer questions, give more of their time" (Rural 28%, Urban 25%).

C. Parents and Other Adults. When asked about the organizations (besides school) in which the child participated, we learned that the majority of the sample children do participate in one or more such organizations. Urban children were more likely than Rural ones to participate.

Number of Organizations Child Belongs To

	Total	Appalachian Rural	Urban
0	26%	32%	18%
1	37%	39%	36%
2	24%	19%	28%
3 or more	13%	9%	18%
	74%	67%	82%

These groups were most frequently church-related or national organizations such as Scouts, 4-H, etc. Parents of the children who did belong to these organizations tended to either talk frequently or not at all with the adults

who worked with their children. In general, parents did not consider these talks to be as helpful as had been the talks with teachers or doctors. The reason for this less positive attitude seemed to be that most of these were casual contacts. There were seldom formally arranged conferences or attempts to deal with important problems or concerns.

D. Parents and Organizational Membership. Finally there was an inquiry into the organizational membership(s) of parents and any possible influence they might have on child-rearing. Church membership per se is excluded from this discussion. However, church-related groups are included. The most striking finding was the fact that large numbers of parents belonged to no organization or group. This was particularly true of the Rural parents and was more true of the fathers than the mothers.

Organizational Membership.

	<u>Appalachian Rural</u>		<u>Urban</u>	
	<u>Mothers</u>	<u>Fathers</u>	<u>Mothers</u>	<u>Fathers</u>
None	42%	49%	23%	38%

Mothers who did have organizational memberships, most often belonged to a school-related group such as PTA/PTO, Parent Advisory Council (Rural 39%, Urban 64%). The next most frequently mentioned membership was a church-related one (Rural 16%, Urban 22%). For fathers, however, the situation was quite different. The most common membership for Rural fathers was a work-related one (professional or union, 25%), followed by a school-related organization (15%). The most common organizational membership for Urban fathers was school-related (41%) followed by work-related (professional or Union, 34%).

Thirty-four percent of the Rural respondents and 46% of the Urban respondents said that their organizational membership(s) provided "some opportunities to get advice or talk over their concerns" about the sample child. Most of the particular organizations referred to were school-related; however, a few were church-related. When asked how such opportunities were helpful to them the responses varied by Region.

How Organizational Memberships
Are Helpful in Child-Rearing
(Three Highest Mentions in Rank Order)

<u>Appalachian Rural</u>	<u>Urban</u>
--------------------------	--------------

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. "A chance to find out what our children are doing" (39%) | 1. "A chance to discuss and compare with other parents" (24%) |
| 2. "A chance to discuss and compare with other parents" (17%) | 2. "The opportunity to get advice, here talks, etc." (19%) |
| 3. "The opportunity to get advice, hear talks, etc." (15%)
n=118 | 3. "A chance to find out what our children are doing" (14%)
n=166 |

Most Important Source of Advice and Help

Respondents who agreed that "all parents need help" were asked to name their most important source of advice and help in rearing the sample child. By far the highest number of responses were "own parents or in-laws." However, when viewed by region, "own parents or in-laws" were a somewhat less important source for Urban parents than for Rural ones while the converse was true for "friends" and "spouse/self/biological parent." Overall it appears that informal sources were much more likely to be mentioned as the most important source of help than either formal or media sources.

Most Important Source of Advice and Help

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Appalachian Rural</u>	<u>Urban</u>
Own parents or in-laws	27%	28%	23%
Spouse, self, biological parent	9%	6%	10%
Other family	3%	4%	2%
Friends, co-workers	7%	4%	11%
SUBTOTAL INFORMAL	46%	42%	46%
Prayer, church, Bible, minister	11%	12%	9%
Doctor, pediatrician	5%	5%	5%
Child's teacher	5%	5%	5%
school staff			
Family Services	1%	1%	1%
Parenting classes	.2%	.3%	.3%
SUBTOTAL FORMAL	22%	23%	20%
Reading materials	4%	2%	6%
Do not agree that parents need help	22%	25%	20%
DK, NA	6%	7%	7%
	n=1,015	n=358	n=362

Specific Situations and Sources of Help

Another method of determining respondents' sources of advice and help was to present them with vignettes of specific situations commonly experienced by parents and ask where they would turn for help if they found themselves in a like situation. The five specific vignettes had to do with:

- 1) a growth and development question or concern
- 2) a health problem
- 3) a social-emotional question or concern
- 4) a learning problem
- 5) a question about their child's opportunities for higher education.

We were interested in finding out where parents would turn for help first and then next. In terms of our preceeding discussions of the various types of sources of help, it is clear that parents could choose to turn first to an informal source (family and friends), to a media source (reading material, television) or to a formal source (school staff, doctor, social welfare caseworker, etc.).

What we found was that, in the case of these five specific situations, most parents indicated they would turn first to a formal source of help. Thus for a growth and development question, 70% would turn first to a doctor. For a health problem experienced by their child, 93% would turn first to a doctor. Responses were most varied in response to a social-emotional concern. Yet even in this case, the highest response was the school (35%) followed by the child (14%), the church (10%), the doctor or clinic (9%) and a family member (9%). For a learning problem parents overwhelmingly said they would turn first to the school (87%). In regard to a question about the child's opportunities for a good education, parents would turn to the schools (65%) first and to colleges second (7%).

Differences between Rural and Urban parent responses were small. When asked where they would turn next (if the first source of help did not work out), formal sources were lower but were still the highest type of response. Informal sources increased somewhat, and "Don't know" responses increased a great deal. The following table illustrates the break-down by formal, informal and media sources for "Where would you turn first?" and "Where would you turn next?"

Types of Help Sought in Specific Situations

Growth and Development

	Appalachian Rural		Urban	
	First	Next	First	Next
Formal	74%	49%	71%	45%
Informal	13%	17%	11%	17%
Media	10%	9%	14%	8%
DK, NA	4%	26%	4%	30%

Health

	Appalachian Rural		Urban	
	First	Next	First	Next
Formal	96%	73%	95%	65%
Informal	2%	4%	2%	4%
Media	.3%	.6%	.6%	1%
DK, NA	3%	22%	3%	31%

Social-Emotional

	Appalachian Rural		Urban	
	First	Next	First	Next
Formal	55%	40%	54%	41%
Informal	22%	17%	24%	14%
Media	3%	2%	5%	3%
DK, NA	21%	41%	18%	41%

Learning

	Appalachian Rural		Urban	
	First	Next	First	Next
Formal	94%	62%	93%	64%
Informal	4%	11%	3%	8%
Media	0	0	0	0
DK, NA	2%	28%	4%	28%

Higher Education

	Appalachian Rural		Urban	
	First	Next	First	Next
Formal	76%	45%	69%	39%
Informal	.8%	1%	2%	.9%
Media	.3%	.6%	4%	4%
DK, NA	23%	52%	26%	57%

Thus, although these parents have strongly indicated the importance of family and friends as sources of help and support in child-rearing, it appears that when faced with a specific problem or concern which requires attention, parents tend to turn first to a formal or professional source.

AWARENESS AND UTILIZATION OF LOCAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Awareness of Types of Services Available

Parents were asked about four different types of programs or services for families and whether these were available in their communities or counties. If a respondent replied "yes," she or he was then expected to provide the name or a brief description of the program or agency. During the coding procedure any agency or program mentioned by a respondent was matched with the list of local programs and services known to exist in that county.*

What is most striking about the results is that, in most cases, less than one-half of the respondents were familiar enough with these types of local programs to describe or name them. The one exception was the type of programs/services "that provide assistance to families facing difficult situations, e.g., financial, health, drug abuse problems." Sixty-six percent of the total sample were able to name or describe such a program which corresponded to one on our community survey list. However only 41% were familiar with programs/agencies "that provide any kind of preparation for parenthood," 40% were familiar with programs "that try to provide for parents' own needs, aside from their roles as

*This information was obtained by means of community surveys of programs and services which were carried out by local interviewers prior to the interviewing stage. It should be noted that all four types of programs and services were represented in every county in which parents were interviewed.

parents" (e.g., the development of interests, communication skills, job training) and only 19% were familiar with programs "that provide a group or service to parents who have no particular problem, but who just want to learn to be better, more effective parents." When viewed by Region, it is apparent that the Appalachian Rural parents were less aware of three of the types of services than were the Urban parents.

Awareness of Different Types of Programs/Services
Available Locally

Could name/describe a program that provides	Total	Appal. Rural	Urban
1) Preparation for parenthood	41%	33%	42%
2) Assistance to families facing difficult situations	66%	63%	64%
3) An opportunity to learn to be more effective parents	19%	14%	25%
4) For parents own needs as individuals	40%	35%	46%
	n=1,015	n=358	n=362

Parents who did not know whether one or more of the four types of programs were available, were asked where they would go to find out, if the need should arise. Slightly over one-half said they would turn to an agency for such information; only a small number said they would turn to a friend or a family member. The particular agencies most frequently mentioned were a social service agency or a school. The most interesting revelation, however, turned out to be the high percentage of these parents who said "Don't know" or who would not answer the question at all (Total 26%, Appal. Rural 30%, Urban 30%). This subsample of respondents not only do not know about programs or services that are available to them, but they have no idea where to go to find out whether or not they are available.

Variations in Awareness by Education

When a third variable, educational attainment, was related to awareness of programs and Region of residence, it was again apparent that there are differences within the Regions as well as between them.

Awareness of Programs/Services by Level of Education

Awareness of Programs/ Services that provide	APPALACHIAN RURAL			URBAN		
	<u>Less Than High School</u>	<u>High School Graduate</u>	<u>More Than High School</u>	<u>Less Than High School</u>	<u>High School Graduate</u>	<u>More Than High School</u>
1) Preparation for parenthood	32%	29%	36%	18%	21%	40%
2) Assistance to families facing difficult situa- tions	52%	65%	69%	34%	43%	59%
3) An opportunity to learn to be more effective parents	11%	7%	18%	7%	9%	25%
4) For parents own needs as individuals	19%	30%	39%	16%	30%	37%

In every case, respondents with higher education were more aware of the local programs and services.

Familiarity and Utilization of Specific Local Programs and Services

Respondents were also asked to respond to a list of names of specific programs or services in their communities or counties. For each name, parents were asked three things: 1) "had they ever heard of such a program," 2) "were they familiar with the program" and 3) "had they ever used the program." The following table presents the mean numbers for each Region.

Mean Numbers of Specific Local Programs/Services Respondents Had Heard of:

Appalachian Rural	Urban
12.9	15.7

Mean Numbers of Specific Local Programs/Services Respondents Were Familiar With:

Appalachian Rural	Urban
8.7	11.0

Mean Numbers of Specific Local Programs/Services Respondents Had Used:

Appalachian Rural	Urban
5.0	4.7

First it is obvious that respondents were less likely to have used a program/service than to be familiar with the program and were less likely to be familiar with the program than to have heard of it. Secondly, there are Regional differences. Urban parents had heard of and were familiar with more programs and services for parents and children than were Rural parents. But there was little difference in utilization of the programs/services.

However, the numbers of programs/services available were not equal across counties. In general, in Urban counties there were more and varied programs/services for families. Therefore, another way to look

at these data is to determine what percent of the total number of programs in each county respondents were aware of and had utilized. When this is done the picture changes. Rural parents are seen to be somewhat more aware of the totality of available programs/services than were the Urban parents. And Rural parents had actually used a higher percentage of the programs available to them than had the Urban parents.

Average Percent of Total Number of Local Programs/Services Respondents Had Heard of:

Appalachian Rural	Urban
68.8%	64.4%

Average Percent of Total Number of Local Programs/Services Respondents Were Familiar With:

Appalachian Rural	Urban
48.3%	44.4%

Average Percent of Total Number of Local Programs/Services Respondents Had Used:

Appalachian Rural	Urban
26.4%	17.6%

ATTITUDES

Attitude Toward Receiving Help As A Parent

As is well known, attitudes are important because they influence behavior. Parents who believe they should be self-sufficient in their parenting role, will not be likely to seek or accept help or advice. Practitioners who work with families have told us that this kind of attitude can cause problems. Therefore, we decided to try to tap this attitude by asking parents whether or not they agreed that "in today's world everyone needs some kind of help in rearing children." An undisputed majority responded "Yes" (Total 77%, Rural, 73%, Urban 78%). But what about the 23% who did not agree that everyone needs help? What do we know about them? We know that they do not correspond exactly with those who said they "entrusted no one with some responsibility" for the sample child nor do they correspond exactly with those who expressed no needs. We also know that they tend to be the respondents with lower educational attainment as seen in the following table. A more intense deviant analysis would be of interest.

Educational Levels of Respondents
Who Do Not Agree that All Parents
Need Help

	<u>Less Than High School</u>	<u>High School Graduate</u>	<u>More Than High School</u>
Urban "Do not agree"	29%	19%	12%
Rural "Do not agree"	25%	24%	17%

Attitude Toward Being A Parent

Sixty-seven percent of our total respondents said they did not have a clear idea of what it would be like to be a parent before actually becoming one. Fifty percent said there were things they wish they had known before becoming a parent, and 81% felt strongly that there were things they would like to pass on to help their children become good parents.

Most respondents who said the parenting experience differed from their expectations explained that it was "more difficult, demanding, time consuming" and that they had not anticipated "the degree to which their lives would be changed, the lack of freedom, etc." These parents wished that they had known beforehand just how great the responsibility would be, in terms of time and expense. Many wished they had waited until they were older to marry and have a family.

There was little difference between Appalachian Rural and the Urban parents in the responses to these questions. They were in complete agreement when it came to what they would like to pass on to their children. This advice was, most frequently: 1) "Be ready, not too young, know what you are getting into" 2) "Have patience, trust, understanding" 3) "Have love and the ability to express love."

The Ideal Mother and the Ideal Father

We felt it important to gain some understanding of our respondents' ideal for parents. The question is interesting in itself but is also useful for interpreting parents needs, why they may or may not look to certain sources for help and advice and how they relate to agencies or organizations.

Parents were asked to think of "a woman you know who does the overall best job of being a mother. What is it that makes this woman an especially good mother? How would you describe her?" Similar questions were asked about "a man you know who does the overall best job of being a father."

The results were strikingly similar for the Rural and Urban samples. The only discrepancies occur in regard to the ideal father. These consist of some differences in rank order after the three highest mentions. For the ideal father, "good communication" is clearly more important to the Urban parents than the Rural ones.

The Ideal Mother
(Qualities Receiving Highest Numbers of Mentions)*

<u>Appalachian Rural</u>		<u>Urban</u>	
1. Is patient, understanding	210 (59%)	1. Is patient, understanding	231 (64%)
2. Loves children, shows love	145 (41%)	2. Loves children, shows love	168 (46%)
3. Spends time with children	129 (36%)	3. Spends time with children	145 (40%)
4. Has good communication with children	89 (25%)	4. Has good communication with children	98 (27%)
5. Cares deeply, wants the best for children	71 (20%)	5. Cares deeply, wants the best for children	59 (16%)
6. Disciplines children	65 (18%)	6. Disciplines children	50 (14%)
n=358		n=362	

The Ideal Father
(Qualities Receiving Highest Numbers of Mentions)*

<u>Appalachian Rural</u>		<u>Urban</u>	
1. Spends time with children	224 (63%)	1. Spends time with children	241 (67%)
2. Is patient, understanding	137 (38%)	2. Is patient, understanding	165 (46%)
3. Loves children, shows love	128 (36%)	3. Loves children, shows love	148 (41%)
4. Is good provider	105 (29%)	4. Has good communication with children	90 (25%)
5. Disciplines children	91 (25%)	5. Is good provider	78 (22%)
6. Has good communication with children	53 (15%)	6. Disciplines children	71 (20%)
n=358		n=362	

Aspirations for Child

Parents were asked three kinds of questions related to aspirations. These had to do with their hopes for the sample child's educational

*Multiple mentions by most respondents.

attainment, for her/his occupation and the kind of personal qualities they would like the sample child to have as an adult.

Education. Overall approximately one-half of our respondents would like their children to obtain a college education, less than one-fourth would be satisfied with high school graduation, and approximately one-fourth would leave it up to the child's abilities and wishes. Urban parents were less likely than Rural parents to be satisfied with a high school education.

Aspirations for Child's Educational Attainment

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Appal. Rural</u>	<u>Urban</u>
High School Graduate	19%	23%	13%
College Education	49%	47%	52%
As far as child can and wants to	26%	25%	28%
Vocational Education	3%	3%	3%
Post. Grad.	2%	1%	3%
DK, NA	1%	1%	1%
	n=1,015	n=358	n=362

Occupation. Slightly over one-half of all respondents declined to name a particular kind of occupation they would like for their child. Instead they replied "whatever he/she wants." Approximately 30% named a profession of some kind, with the remaining responses being varied.

Aspirations for Child's Occupation

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Appal. Rural</u>	<u>Urban</u>
Whatever he/she wants	55%	54%	54%
Some sort of profession	29%	27%	32%
Other (trade, clerical good paying, etc.)	9%	11%	9%
DK, NA	7%	8%	5%
	n=1,015	n=358	n=362

Personal Qualities. Personal qualities most desired for the sample child as an adult were compared for Rural and Urban parents. "Respectable, trustworthy, honest" ranked highest and "Caring, loving" ranked second with Rural Third Grade parents; these qualities were ranked in reverse by Urban Third Grade parents.

Aspirations for Child's Personal Qualities As An Adult
(Numbers of Mentions in Rank Order)*

<u>Total</u>		<u>Appal. Rural</u>		<u>Urban</u>	
1. Caring	559 (55%)	1. Respectable	195 (54%)	1. Caring	222 (61%)
2. Respectable	532 (52%)	2. Caring	180 (50%)	2. Respectable	171 (47%)
3. Own Person	261 (26%)	3. Well-liked	93 (26%)	3. Own Person	110 (30%)
4. Well-Liked	239 (24%)	4. Own Person	74 (21%)	4. Well-liked	77 (21%)
5. Hard Worker	182 (18%)	5. Hard Worker	60 (17%)	5. Hard Worker	64 (18%)
6. Satisfied	157 (15%)	6. Christian	59 (16%)	6. Satisfied	62 (17%)
7. Christain	155 (15%)	7. Satisfied	42 (12%)	7. Christian	51 (14%)
8. Educated	88 (9%)	8. Educated	31 (9%)	8. Educated	34 (9%)
9. Good Citizen	36 (4%)	9. Good Citizen	8 (2%)	9. Good Citizen	16 (4%)
10. Healthy	14 (1%)	10. Healthy	6 (2%)	10. Healthy	4 (1%)
n=1,015		n=358		n=362	

*Mutliple mentions by most respondents

Who or What Will Have an Impact on Child's Future

After the discussion of aspirations for the sample child, parents were asked how much they believed different persons, organizations, or institutions would influence their child's future (the attainment of the aspirations). Not surprisingly most respondents believed they and their spouses would have a great deal of influence on the way their child turned out. Less predictably parents rated the school as having almost as much influence as they would. All other influences mentioned were rated much lower.

Perceived Influences on Child's Future

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>APPAL. RURAL</u>	<u>URBAN</u>
Impact of Respondent			
A great deal	75%	75%	75%
Somewhat	23%	24%	24%
Very little, NA	1%	1%	1%
Impact of Spouse			
A great deal	69%	74%	65%
Somewhat	19%	18%	20%
Very little, NA	6%	5%	8%
Not applicable (no spouse)	5%	3%	7%
Impact of School			
A great deal	68%	72%	65%
Somewhat	29%	25%	31%
Very little, NA	3%	3%	4%
Impact of Government			
A great deal	22%	21%	23%
Somewhat	46%	48%	44%
Very little, NA	32%	31%	33%
Impact of Anything/ Anyone Else*			
A great deal	37%	33%	37%
Somewhat	17%	16%	19%
Very little, NA	6%	8%	7%
Not applicable (nothing else)	40%	42%	37%

*The specific others mentioned were most frequently: church or minister, grandparent, biological parent, child's peers and teacher or other adults who work with child.

PARENTS OF KINDERGARTEN,
THIRD AND TENTH GRADE STUDENTS:
A COMPARISON

Unlike the previous sections of the report, this section will compare parents by grade level of the sample child, not by Region. This is due to the fact that the number of Kindergarten and Tenth grade parents are small, making further subdivision impossible. The reader should bear in mind however that the Kindergarten and Tenth grade parent interviews are more representative of the Appalachian Rural Region than the Urban Region. Due to various reasons (greater interest and concentration in some states than others and different response rates) the Kindergarten and Tenth grade samples are approximately 70% Appalachian Rural and 30% Urban whereas the Third grade sample is approximately 50% Appalachian Rural and 50% Urban.

Responses of parents of children in Kindergarten, Third and Tenth grades were similar in some respects, but different in others. This discussion will focus mainly on the differences. These results are suggestive only, as the numbers of Kindergarten and Tenth grade parents are small.

Background Information

As far as demographic characteristics are concerned, differences were found between the three groups in: length of time lived in the communities, number of times moved in past five years, education and labor force participation.

It is obvious, of course, that parents of older children would tend to be older. It is perhaps not quite so obvious that parents of older children are much more settled, having lived longer in the same place than parents of younger children. Sixty-five percent of the Tenth grade

parents had lived in the same community over 20 years; this was true of 40% of the Third grade parents and 38% of the Kindergarten parents. Seventy-three percent of the Tenth grade parents had not moved during the past five years compared to 53% of the Third grade parents and only 35% of the Kindergarten parents.

Parents of Tenth graders were less likely than parents of younger children to have attained more than a high school education. And although a large number of all respondents planned to go back to school in the future, this percent was highest for parents of Kindergarten children.

Respondents' Education
By Grade Level of Sample Child

	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Third Grade</u>	<u>Tenth Grade</u>
Less than High School	30%	30%	23%
High School Graduate	35%	43%	53%
More than High School	36%	27%	23%
	n=86	n=720	n=94

Parents' Plans to Return to School
in Future by Grade Level of Sample Child

	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Third Grade</u>	<u>Tenth Grade</u>
Respondent, yes	33%	26%	26%
Spouse, yes	7%	7%	14%
Both, yes	5%	3%	0%

Participation in the labor force was clearly associated with higher grade level of the sample child. The increasing number of respondents who worked full-time contributed most to these differences.

Respondents' Participation in
the Labor Force by Grade Level of Sample Child

	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Third Grade</u>	<u>Tenth Grade</u>
Working full-time	17%	33%	41%
Working part-time	17%	14%	18%
Looking for work	1%	2%	1%
Total in Labor Force	35%	49%	60%

Present Parenting Situation

The great majority of all parents interviewed said they shared responsibility for the sample child with one or more others. However, Kindergarten parents were most likely to share the responsibility with one or more other persons (Kindergarten parents, 97%; Third Grade parents, 83%; Tenth Grade parents, 81%). Grandparents and other relatives were more often named by Kindergarten parents than the other parents as the persons who shared responsibility. An older brother or sister of sample child was more frequently mentioned by Third Grade and particularly Tenth grade parents.

The percent of sample children who were emotionally attached to adults (in addition to parents) did not vary much by grade level, although it was slightly higher for Kindergarten children. (Kindergarten, 89%; Third Grade, 82%; Tenth Grade, 86%). The variation in the type of adult named is of interest, however. These persons were most likely to be grandparents or other relatives for the younger sample children whereas for older children they were most likely to be a family friend or neighbor. Attachment to workers in organizations also increased with age; 11% of Kindergarten and Third Grade children were attached to such persons; 20% of the Tenth Grade children were so attached.

Parents of Kindergarten children tended to perceive themselves as having more needs than the parents of Third or Tenth graders. When the Perceived Need Index was divided into the three indicators, it was evident that Kindergarten parents were more likely than Tenth Grade parents to feel they had special problems as parents and were more likely than Third Grade or Tenth Grade parents to have unanswered questions and to report that a needed type of help was not available locally.

Perceived Need Index
for Parents with Children at Different Levels

	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Third Grade</u>	<u>Tenth Grade</u>
0 needs expressed	43%	51%	55%
1 need expressed	34%	34%	30%
2 needs expressed	22%	12%	14%
3 needs expressed	1%	3%	1%
	n=86	n=720	n=94

Special Problems as A Parent
By Grade Level of Sample Child

	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Third Grade</u>	<u>Tenth Grade</u>
Yes	22%	22%	14%

Unanswered Questions Related to Parenting
by Grade Level of Sample Child

	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Third Grade</u>	<u>Tenth Grade</u>
Yes	31%	23%	24%

Any Type of Needed Help for Parents
Not Available Locally

	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Third Grade</u>	<u>Tenth Grade</u>
Yes	28%	23%	22%

Sources of Advice and Help

A. Informal Sources. Informal sources of help in the form of talks with other parents were sought most often by the Kindergarten parents although the majority of all respondents said they talked frequently.

Percent of Respondents Who
Talked Frequently With Other Parents
by Grade Level of Sample Child

	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Third Grade</u>	<u>Tenth Grade</u>
% who talked frequently (once a week or more)	73%	64%	61%

All three groups were agreed that the most important benefit of these talks was the opportunity to "share and support each other." A lesser but still important second benefit was the chance "to learn" from other parents' experiences.

Most parents in all three groups had a favorite person, very close to them, with whom they discussed parenting (Kindergarten 83%, Third Grade 73%, Tenth Grade 80%). For Kindergarten parents, this person was most likely to be the "child's maternal grandparent," followed by a "close friend" or "other relative." However, for Third Grade and Tenth Grade parents "other relatives and/or close friends were more likely to be named first." All parents agreed that "understanding" was the most important quality such a confidante had. In addition, Kindergarten parents valued persons who "had experience" and were "very informative." For Tenth Grade parents it was more important that this person have "children the same age" as theirs.

B. Media Sources. As a whole, parents of the younger children (Kindergarten) used various media as sources of help more often than did the other parents. Kindergarten parents reported reading more magazine articles, books, pamphlets and newsletters on subjects of child-rearing and watching more television programs related to children and parents than was true for the Third and Tenth grade parents. Reading relevant articles in newspapers did not vary much. The majority of all parents felt that reading materials and television programs could be more helpful to parents. Suggestions for improvement were the same as those discussed previously.

Use of Media as Sources of
Advice and Help in Child-Rearing
By Grade Level of Sample Child

% who had used the
following in recent
months

	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Third Grade</u>	<u>Tenth Grade</u>
Magazines	49%	41%	34%
Pamphlets, newsletters	27%	18%	13%
Newspapers	21%	26%	26%
Books	36%	27%	24%
Television programs	55%	48%	45%

C. Formal Sources. The question "How often have you talked with (sample child's name) teacher(s) in the past year?" elicited very different responses from parents of Kindergarten and Third Graders versus the parents of Tenth Graders. It appears that the norm for Tenth Grade parents is not to talk with their child's teachers or not to do so more than once a year.

How Often Talked With Child's
Teacher(s) Within the Past Year
By Grade Level of Sample Child

	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Third Grade</u>	<u>Tenth Grade</u>
Never	1%	7%	45%
Once	14%	16%	21%
2-6 times	53%	52%	30%
7-12 times	12%	6%	1%
Often (more than once a month.)	19%	16%	1%
DK, NA	1%	3%	2%
	n=86	n=720	n=94

When asked how helpful, in general, their talks with teacher(s) had been, those who had had such talks tended to feel positively about them. However, it is clear that the perception that talks were "very helpful" tended to decrease with the increasing grade level of the sample child.

In General, How Helpful Were Talks With
Teacher(s) by Grade Level of Sample Child

	Kindergarten	Third Grade	Tenth Grade
Very helpful	70%	60%	40%
Somewhat	27%	32%	44%
Not at all	1%	6%	5%
NA, DK	1%	2%	10%
	n=86	n=720	n=94

Similarly, Tenth Grade parents were least likely of the three groups to have talked with a doctor about the sample child within the past year.

Number of Times Parents Discussed
Sample Child With A Doctor During Past Year
By Grade Level of Child

	Kindergarten	Third Grade	Tenth Grade
Never	17%	28%	40%
Once	42%	30%	31%
2-5 times	27%	28%	18%
6-9 times	9%	5%	2%
10 or more	5%	6%	4%
NA, DK	--	3%	4%
	n=86	n=720	n=94

The majority of all parents who had talked with a doctor said the talks were "very helpful." However, Kindergarten parents were most likely to say parent/doctor talks could be made more helpful.

As far as organizational membership is concerned, the mothers of the sample children generally held more such memberships than the fathers. However, in comparing the three grade levels, mothers of Kindergarten and Third Grade children were more likely to hold organizational memberships than mothers of Tenth Graders. The two most common types of memberships for mothers were 1) school-related (PTA, PTO, Parent Advisory Council, etc.) and 2) church-related. For fathers, the school-related organizations were most common only when children were young. Fathers of third grade and tenth grade children most frequently named a work-related organization (professional, union, etc.).

Two Most Common Organizational
Memberships for Mothers and Fathers
By Grade Level of Sample Child

Mothers			
	Kindergarten	Third Grade	Tenth Grade
First	School-Related 55%	School-Related 51%	School-Related 33%
Second	Church-Related 24%	Church-Related 19%	Church-Related 21%

Fathers			
	School-Related	Work-Related	Work-Related
First	35%	30%	30%
Second	Church-Related 20%	School-Related 28%	School-Related Civic Assoc. >21%

Kindergarten parents were more likely than Third or Tenth grade parents to belong to an organization which provided them opportunities to get help and advice concerning child-rearing. These particular organizations were most frequently school-related (PTA, PTO, Parent Advisory Council, etc.) but some were church-related.

Parents who Belonged to Organizations
that Provided Opportunities to
Get Advice About Child-Rearing
By Grade Level of Sample Child

Kindergarten	Third Grade	Tenth Grade
50%	39%	33%

D. Main Source of Advice and Help. The great majority of parents of all grade levels agreed that "everyone needs some kind of help in rearing children." (Kindergarten 85%, Third Grade 76%, Tenth Grade 85%.) When asked to name their one most important source of advice and help in rearing the sample child, the three groups of parents responded similarly. Each group named "own parents or in-laws" most frequently and "prayer, Bible, church minister" next most frequently.

Awareness of Local Programs and Services

As was described earlier all parents were asked about four different types of programs or services for families. They were asked whether these types of programs existed in their county and if so, whether they could name and/or describe specific programs. Responses were matched with our community

survey of programs. Responses were fairly similar across grade levels of children. Exceptions were that Kindergarten parents were much more aware of programs that provide some kind of "preparation for parenthood" and Third Grade parents were somewhat less likely to be aware of programs/services that provide "assistance to families in trouble."

Awareness of Different Types of Programs/Services
Available Locally

Could name/describe a program/service that provides	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Third Grade</u>	<u>Tenth Grade</u>
1) Preparation for parenthood	45%	29%	31%
2) Assistance to families facing difficult situations	65%	52%	66%
3) An opportunity to learn to be more effective parents	10%	12%	11%
4) For parents own needs as individuals	35%	27%	35%

If they didn't know whether any one of these programs existed in their counties but wanted to find out, Kindergarten parents were more likely than Third or Tenth grade parents to say they would turn to the school for information and referral.

Finally the mean numbers of local programs and services which parents had heard of, were familiar with and had ever used, were compared by grade level of sample child. There was found to be little difference.

Mean Numbers of Local Programs/Services
Respondents Had Heard of, Were Familiar With,
and Had Ever Used, by Grade Level
of Sample Child

Programs/Services	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Third Grade</u>	<u>Tenth Grade</u>
Heard of	13.6	14.3	13.9
Familiar With	9.8	9.9	11.7
Ever Used	4.0	4.8	4.3

Attitudes

A. Preparation for Parenthood. As the age level of the sample children increased, parents were less likely to say there was "something they wished they had known before becoming parents" but more likely to say there were things about being a parent that they "would like to pass on to their children."

"Anything You Wish You Had Known Before Becoming a Parent"

	<u>Kindergarten Parents</u>	<u>Third Grade Parents</u>	<u>Tenth Grade Parents</u>
Yes	56%	51%	40%

"Anything you Would Like to Pass on to Your Child About Being a Parent"

	<u>Kindergarten Parents</u>	<u>Third Grade Parents</u>	<u>Tenth Grade Parents</u>
Yes	77%	79%	89%

There was general agreement regarding the substantive content of these responses. In all three groups, parents most often wished they had known that being a parent is a big responsibility (time-consuming, expensive, etc.) Parents most often wanted to pass on to their child the importance of 1) Being ready, not too young, know what you're getting into and 2) Having patience, trust and understanding.

B. Aspirations. Some differences were noted between the three parent groups in the aspirations they held for their children. Kindergarten parents were more likely to want a college education for their children than was true for Third Grade or especially Tenth Grade parents. At the same time the number of parents who said the level of educational attainment desired for their child would depend on the child's wishes and abilities increased with the increasing grade level of the child. Similarly, for occupational aspirations, those who wanted a professional occupation

decreased from the Kindergarten, to Third and Tenth Grade parents. Those who said they "didn't care" or "whatever the child wished," increased dramatically from Kindergarten to Tenth Grade. As to the personal qualities they would like their children to have as adults, the following three qualities were ranked highest. The three groups of parents were in general agreement except that the Third Grade parents ranked "Caring" first and "Respectable," second. "Respectable" received the highest percent of mentions by Tenth Grade parents.

Three Highest Ranked Personal Qualities Named by Parents

<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Third Grade</u>	<u>Tenth Grade</u>
1. Respectable 48 (56%)	1. Caring 402 (56%)	1. Respectable 64 (68%)
2. Caring 45 (52%)	2. Respectable 366 (51%)	2. Caring 51 (54%)
3. Own Person 20 (23%)	3. Own Person 184 (26%)	3. Own Person 24 (26%)
n=86	n=720	n=94

When parents were asked to rate a number of persons and organizations regarding their perceived influence on the sample child's future, there were both similarities and differences among the three parent groups. The most notable differences were that the influence of the school and the spouse were rated lower by Tenth Grade parents than by Kindergarten or Third Grade parents.

Persons or Organizations Rated As Having "A Great Deal" of Influence on Sample Child's Future

	<u>Kindergarten Parents</u>	<u>Third Grade Parents</u>	<u>Tenth Grade Parents</u>
Respondent	74%	75%	77%
Spouse	74%	73%	62%
School	69%	69%	55%
Government	22%	22%	20%
Other	39%	--	38%

The "Other" influences, as specified by respondents, were most often a church, church-related or the child's peers. It was surprising however, that Kindergarten parents rated the influences of the child's peers on her/his future considerably higher than did the parents of Tenth Graders.

C. Perceptions of Ideal Parents. Finally the parents of Kindergarten, Third and Tenth Grade children were compared by their definitions of an "ideal mother" and "ideal father." Responses were similar, with some small variations for the "ideal mother."

For the "ideal father," certain qualities ("spends time," "loves children," "is patient," "is a good provider") are increasingly important with increasing grade level of child.

(See Table on page 49.)

Summary

In this section of the report some differences between parents of children of different grade levels have become apparent.

Parents of younger children are more likely to feel they have needs in the form of unanswered questions and types of programs/services not available locally. Their one main source of help and advice is most often the child's maternal grandparent.. They are less likely to be employed full-time. They hold high, and more specific, aspirations for their children than do the other parents. These parents of younger children seem to more actively seek help and advice of every sort, from both formal and informal sources. They talk more to other parents, they talk more to professionals (teachers, doctor). They make greater use of the media as a source of information and help. And they are more likely to belong to organizations that provide advice and help with child-rearing.

Parents of older children are somewhat less likely to express needs in regard to child-rearing. Their one main source of help is most often a close friend or a relative other than child's grandparents. They are more likely to be employed full-time. Aspirations held for their child

Ideal Mother
(Qualities Receiving Highest Numbers of Mentions)*

<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Third Grade</u>		<u>Tenth Grade</u>	
1. Is patient, understanding	59 (69%)	1. Is patient, understanding	441 (61%)	1. Is patient, understanding	65 (69%)
2. Loves children, shows love	41 (48%)	2. Loves children, shows love	313 (43%)	2. Loves children, shows love	47 (50%)
3. Spends time with children	39 (45%)	3. Spends time with children	274 (38%)	3. Spends time with children	37 (39%)
4. Disciplines children	19 (22%)	4. Has good communication with children	187 (26%)	4. Has good communication with children	30 (32%)
5. Has good communicaiton with children	17 (20%)	5. Cares deeply, wants the best	130 (18%)	5. Is calm, easygoing	14 (15%)
6. Cares deeply, wants the best	14 (16%)	6. Disciplines children	115 (16%)	6. Cares deeply, wants the best	13 (14%)
n=86		n=720		n=94	

Ideal Father
(Qualities Receiving Highest Numbers of Mentions)*

<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Third Grade</u>		<u>Tenth Grade</u>	
1. Spends time with children	45 (52%)	1. Spends time with children	465 (65%)	1. Spends time with children	67 (71%)
2. Loves children, shows love	21 (24%)	2. Is patient, understanding	302 (42%)	2. Is patient, understanding	59 (63%)
3. Is patient, understanding	18 (21%)	3. Loves children, shows love	276 (38%)	3. Is good provider	44 (47%)
4. Disciplines children	16 (19%)	4. Is good provider	183 (25%)	4. Loves children, shows love	40 (43%)
5. Is good provider	15 (17%)	5. Disciplines children	162 (22%)	5. Disciplines children	24 (26%)
6. Cares deeply, wants the best	11 (13%)	6. Has good communication with children	143 (20%)	6. Has good communication with children	18 (19%)
n=86		n=720		n=94	

*Multiple mentions by most respondents.

are less specific, more vague and diffuse, e.g., "whatever child wants or is able to do." This probably reflects the reality of their child's school performance at a higher level. Parents of older children do not appear to seek help or advice either from formal or informal sources to the extent that parents of younger children do. This could mean they do not feel the need for help or advice. It could also mean they do not feel the sources available to them can be of any help. It is particularly interesting that Tenth Grade parents are much less plugged into the schools than are Kindergarten and even Third Grade parents. They are less likely to talk to their child's teacher, to belong to school-related organizations, to turn to the school for information, referral or for solutions to problems, and they are less likely to rate the school as having "a great deal" of influence on their child's future.

SUMMARY DISCUSSION

One thousand fifteen parents in five Appalachian states were interviewed in an attempt to ascertain the range of circumstances, experiences and needs of parents in the Region today, with particular emphasis on sources of advice and help. Some questions of interest in approaching this study were:

- 1) the extent to which recent societal changes, in the family (e.g., more working mothers, more single-parent families) are apparent in Appalachia
- 2) the degree to which physical isolation and traditional values (e.g., independence, local orientation) affect availability, awareness and utilization of various sources of help and advice in rural Appalachia
- 3) whether and to what degree parents in Rural Appalachia differ from parents in Urban areas of the same states
- 4) whether there are indications from parents of the ways that agencies/ organizations (which work with children and families) are and are not meeting their needs.

Summary of Results: Rural vs. Urban

For this report, data from the two main subgroups, Appalachian Rural parents of third graders and Urban parents of third graders, were analyzed. We found many differences but also similarities.

More Urban respondents than Rural respondents were in the labor force, used child care arrangements often and were members of single-parent families. Although within each set of parents, 50% expressed one or more needs as parents, Urban parents were more likely to say they had "special problems" and "unanswered questions" whereas Rural parents were more likely

to say that "needed kinds of help were not available" in their communities. There was no difference in the extent to which parents entrusted other adults (beside self and spouse) with some responsibility for the sample child. Over 80% could name one or more such persons. Likewise over 80% in both subgroups said their child was emotionally attached to one or more adults (beside self and spouse).

Informal sources of help and advice were used frequently by both Rural and Urban parents. However, Rural parents were somewhat more likely than were Urban parents to view such talks as "very helpful." The quantity of formal contacts (with school, medical profession, etc.) was fairly equal for the two subgroups. However, Urban parents were much more positive about these contacts than were Rural parents. Urban parents were also more likely to belong to more organizations than Rural parents, including organizations which provided opportunities to get advice or talk over concerns about the sample child. Urban children were also found to belong to more organizations or groups than were Rural children. Media as sources of help in child-rearing were more frequently utilized by Urban parents than by Rural parents; for both, the most frequently used media were magazines and television. Both Urban and Rural parents were most likely to name "own parents or in-laws" as their main source of advice and help, although this was especially true for Rural parents. There was little difference between the two groups in responses to where they would turn for help in specific situations; both tended to name formal, professional sources of help.

In most cases, Urban parents were more aware of various types of programs/services available in their communities. However, when level of education was introduced, it was discovered that higher education was associated with greater awareness within each subgroup. Urban

parents had heard of and were familiar with a larger number of local programs and services, on the average, than Rural parents. There was little differences in utilization however.

In regard to attitudes, there were more similarities than differences between the Urban and Rural parents. The majority in both groups believed "everyone needs help" rearing children. Most indicated they had been unprepared for parenthood and would like to pass on some ideas about parenthood to their children. Definitions of an ideal mother and ideal father were similar. Urban parents held slightly higher aspirations for their children than did Rural parents.

Summary of Results: Parents of Kindergarten, Third and Tenth Grade Children

Parents of younger children expressed more needs and tended to depend more heavily on their parent(s) for help and advice than was true for parents of older children. Parents of younger children also more actively sought help and advice from all kinds of sources: formal, informal and media. Of particular interest was the fact that Tenth Grade parents were obviously much less involved in the schools than were Kindergarten and Third Grade parents.

The Base Sample Survey data provide evidence that there is a range of different situations within which parenting is taking place in the Region. There are differences between and within Appalachian Rural and Urban samples as well as differences between parents of children at different grade levels. Many different sets of needs and different community resources to meet these needs are apparent. In essence, parenthood is complex and often difficult in our society today.

Future Plans

In the immediate future there are plans to prepare descriptive reports for each county and state included in the Base Sample Survey. These will

be made available to the local school systems, to other interested local agencies who work with families, to State Departments of Education and to those respondents who expressed a desire to receive the results. In these reports some implications can be drawn from the data which may be of use to the agencies or organizations. For example, these may be drawn from the needs parents expressed, their suggestions for improving school, medical, and media contacts, and from our knowledge of the parenting situations existing in different locales.

Also slated to begin soon will be further analyses of the data focusing on various subgroups representing high-need families (e.g., single parent families, isolated families, two-job families, families with health problems). These analyses will be related to the division's proposed new work in school-family relations. Some deviant analyses will be appropriate in this regard. For example, we may discover or learn more about different high-need subgroups by taking a closer look at the minority of our respondents who do not believe "everyone needs help" in rearing children, who entrust "no one" else with responsibility for their child, who "seldom or never" talk to teachers or who "seldom or never talk" to other parents about their children.